

**Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**  
**Nelson J. Sabatini, Secretary**

**Community Health Administration**  
**Diane L. Matuszak, M.D., M.P.H., Director**

**Epidemiology and Disease Control Program**  
**John P. Krick, Ph.D., Director**



## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 9, 2003 **HO Memo #03-042**

**TO:** Health Officers  
Directors of Nursing  
Communicable Disease Directors  
Environmental Health Directors

**FROM:** Tracy DuVernoy, DVM, MPH  
State Public Health Veterinarian (Acting)

David Blythe, MD, MPH  
State Epidemiologist (Acting)

**RE: Monkeypox in the US**

As you are probably aware, human monkeypox cases have recently been identified in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana. These cases appear to be associated with exposure to ill prairie dogs that entered the pet trade and which may have been exposed to a monkeypox-infected Gambian rat. Additional investigation is underway and may clarify the exact mechanisms of transmission. To date, however, there is no evidence that Maryland residents have been exposed to the monkeypox-infected animals associated with these human cases.

Monkeypox is an orthopox virus, and is therefore reportable in Maryland. Please notify the DHMH Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control Programs (EDCP) immediately if you receive any reports of possible monkeypox cases.

Please review the attached Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "Interim Infection Control and Exposure Management Guidance in the Health-Care and Community Setting for Patients with Possible Monkeypox Virus Infection" and "Monkeypox Infections in Animals: Interim Guidance for Veterinarians and Pet Owners". The infection control and exposure

management guidance is also being distributed by DHMH to Emergency Departments and acute care Infection Control Professionals.

Additional information can be obtained from the CDC at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/monkeypox/index.htm>

Note that the sale of prairie dogs by Maryland pet stores and ownership of such animals is illegal. If any of these animals are brought to your attention, please notify Mr. Mark Hoffman of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources immediately at 410-260-8449.

If you have any questions about this information, please contact me at 410-767-6685.

**Attachments:**

**(hard copy sent to Communicable Disease Directors only)**

**cc:** Mark Hoffman, DNR  
DHMH Center for Veterinary Public Health  
J. Krick  
J. Casani  
D. Matuszak  
R. Stringer  
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